

inns are found at short intervals along the road; towns have been built in the mining districts where miners now find proper shelter during the winter months, and experience has proved that the climate, though cold in winter, and at no time very genial, is essentially healthy.

But the main causes which have hitherto deterred a more extensive and permanent population from resorting to and remaining in the mining districts of British Columbia are beyond doubt

1st. The exorbitant prices there of provisions and all other necessities, which prices the construction of the present excellent roads has only sufficed to reduce to a modified extent, and

2nd. The want of steam power, pumps and other machinery, which are essential for the practical working, with profit, of the deep sinkings of the Cariboo Mines, and without which it is impossible to work them at all in the winter, in consequence of the water-wheels now in use being brought to a standstill by frost.

The immense prices of everything in the Cariboo Mines hitherto, has been attributable in the first place to the distance (370 miles) from the head of steam-boat navigation on the Fraser, and to the difficulties, delays, and dangers of packing along the rough trails which had to be passed over before roads were constructed; and, secondly, to the fact that the carrying business has been in the hands of a few individuals, operating, in most cases, on capital borrowed at high rates of interest, amongst whom there has been little or no real competition, and who have always been traders as well as carriers, forwarding their own goods and keeping back those entrusted to their care for other traders when the market above was unstocked, and so regulating prices as high as possible to suit their own advantage.

The opening of a continuous good wagon road from the steam-boat landing on the Lower Fraser to within ninety miles of Richfield, in the autumn of 1863, had the effect of reducing freights from a maximum of \$1.00 (one dollar) per lb. in the spring, to a minimum of forty-five cents per lb. at the close of the season. Since then, twenty-two (22) more miles of road have been opened, and the whole distance through to Richfield will be completed by the end of next year.

An average rate of freight for the season of 1863 may be assumed at sixty (60) cents per lb.; and as 2,500 tons of 2,000 lbs. passed up by Lilloet and Lytton, of which about 2,000 tons were taken into Cariboo, it follows that a sum of \$2,100,000 was paid for freight alone on the supplies for the season, during which, as shown by the Report hereto appended of the Gold Commissioner for Cariboo District, four thousand men in about seven months' work produced \$3,901,000, being an average of about \$1,000 to each man. But of this sum of \$3,901,000, \$2,100,000, as just shown, was paid for freight alone, to which if the cost of the goods at Victoria, interest, profit, &c., be added, is also the amount paid for beef-cattle driven up on foot from the lower country, it will be readily deduced that although the average of gold to each miner was most satisfactory (larger in fact, it is believed, than has ever been produced elsewhere), yet that the gold obtained cost actually almost, if not quite as much as its intrinsic worth. The Gold Commissioner estimated the cost of actual daily subsistence during this year at (\$2.50) two dollars and a half, which estimate was considered too low an average, but at this rate even, four thousand men for seven months would have expended \$2,100,000 for food alone, irrespective of tool, mail, candles, clothing, and other necessities.

In the current year the rate of freight, commencing in the spring at sixty (60) cents per lb., had been reduced in the month of August to twenty-four (24) cents, the lowest rate at which freight has ever been carried over this distance of 370 miles. This reduced rate, at which it was declared by all the carriers no profit was derivable, was regarded as a temporary one resulting from a lull in the amount of freight offering, and from the consequent competition among carriers, and also from the fact that at that time of the year wild grass was abundant along 200 miles of the road, affording sufficient feed for the ox-teams and pack animals. As the winter approaches grass fails, whilst goods are pushed up for winter stock, and to be ready for the early spring trade, and the rates of freight proportionally advance.